

LIFETIME AND CURRENT ATOD ADDICTION

High school students surveyed in this anonymous survey readily reported both lifetime and current addiction to ATOD. As a conservative indicator of need for alcohol and other drug treatment, self-reported current addiction is an important component.

Twenty-seven percent of high school students in Tennessee in 1995/1997 reported ever being addicted to tobacco/nicotine. Twenty-three percent reported caffeine addiction, while 9% reported addiction to alcohol, and 8% to marijuana. Five percent were addicted to prescription drugs, 2% each to LSD or cocaine, 1% each to steroids or heroin, and 3% to other drugs.

Students report current addiction to drugs in similar rank order to their lifetime addiction, from 23% and 18% reporting nicotine and caffeine addiction, respectively, to 6% each reporting alcohol or marijuana addiction, 2% reporting prescription drug addiction, and 1% addiction to LSD, cocaine, steroids or heroin.

Continued addiction rates are estimated by drug based on the percentages of students reporting current addiction to a particular drug among those reporting lifetime addiction to that drug. Nicotine and caffeine show the highest continued addiction rates, followed by marijuana, heroin, LSD, steroids and alcohol. Least likely to continue to addict students, based on self-report, are prescription drugs of abuse, generally psychoactive drugs.

Thus, 79% of students who had ever been addicted to nicotine or tobacco were currently addicted as were 73% of youth ever addicted to caffeine. About two-thirds of students ever addicted to marijuana, heroin, steroids, or LSD or other hallucinogens continued to be currently addicted to each drug, while 62% of students ever addicted to alcohol remained addicted to alcohol and 56%, to cocaine. Continued addiction is noted among 43% of prescription drug abusers and 49% of students addicted to drugs other than those mentioned above.